

strains." Mr. Lawrie is of opinion that "by a continual careful mating and subsequent care of the progeny for several generations it is possible, not only to considerably increase the average egg-production, but also, by careful selection, to evolve a strain with robust constitution, immunity from disease, and marked fecundity."

We suppose that no *Gallus bankiva* in a state of nature would lay more than from 20 to 30 eggs in the year. To increase the number of eggs to 179 is, therefore, a remarkable piece of work. But this, it appears, can only be done in Australia. In our cold climate, we are told on the best authority that anything over 100 eggs from each hen is quite exceptional.

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*Mr. Boyd Alexander's new African Expedition.*—Mr. Boyd Alexander is now departing on another important expedition to West Africa, and will leave England very shortly. The main object in view is the establishment of the fact that the chain of islands in the Gulf of Guinea, on the West Coast of Africa, which are situated at distances varying from twenty to forty miles from the mainland, formed at one time a part of the African Continent.

Some years ago, Mr. Alexander during his exploration at Fernando Po demonstrated that the fauna of that island was closely allied to that of the mainland. As a result of his investigations on that journey, the explorer decided, when opportunity offered, upon pursuing similar investigations with regard to the remaining islands of that group. Literature regarding these islands is scanty, and there has been hitherto practically no scientific exploration of them.

Another important point is to discover whether these islands are of volcanic origin.

Mr. Alexander will not be accompanied by any other European during his travels. His assistant, José Lopez, will leave England in advance, in order to organize the caravan of the expedition at Cape Coast. There being no labour available on the islands themselves, Mr. Alexander will

disembark at the Portuguese island of San Thomas, the most important island of the group, where he will commence his work, and where he will be joined by his Haussa caravan. He proposes to ascend the mountains in the centre of the island, which have an altitude of about 5600 feet, and he will spend altogether about two months in San Thomas, exploring and making collections. Mr. Alexander will then sail to the most southerly island of the group, the Island of Annebon, and on the completion of his work there will also visit Prince's Island.

Having finished its work on the chain of islands, the expedition will cross to the mainland for the purpose of exploration in the Kamerun Colony, for which every assistance will be given by the German Government. The first object will be to ascend the celebrated Kamerun Peak, which rises to an altitude of 15,000 feet, and which the explorer holds to be the sister mountain of Ruwenzori in East Africa. He expects that he will find here a fauna nearly identical with that of Ruwenzori. The district to be traversed is largely unknown, and one of the great difficulties will be the lack of water, which will have to be carried by the expedition.

If time and health permit, the expedition will further penetrate into the interior of Kamerun, to explore a range of hills which are said to attain an altitude of 10,000 feet. Travelling is, however, very difficult, owing to the mountainous nature of the country and the difficulties of transport. The expedition will probably be absent about twelve months.

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*Proposed Zoological Exploration of Dutch New Guinea.*—Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant sends us a copy of the following appeal to his "Brother Members of the B. O. U.":—

"We are now celebrating the Jubilee of the greatest Ornithological Society in the world, and it has occurred to me that we might do something more than is at present being done to mark this great event. My suggestion is that we should

unite in undertaking the zoological exploration of a totally unknown land of vast and unlimited promise, and that the ornithological results, which are certain to prove unique, should be published in a special volume of the 'Ibis' in further commemoration of the Jubilee.

"The following is a brief outline of the scheme, with which I am sure you will all be in sympathy, and in which I hope as many of you as possible will participate.

"The wonderful Fauna of New Guinea, especially the marvellous forms of Bird-life to be found there, has long attracted the attention of naturalists in all parts of the world. The explorations during recent years of certain portions of the Dutch territory at the north-west end and of the British and German possessions at the eastern extremity have brought to light many extraordinary and hitherto unknown forms, more particularly new Birds-of-Paradise and Gardener Bower-Birds; but the central portion of that vast island is still absolutely unexplored, though there is no portion of the Globe that promises to yield such an abundance of Zoological treasures to those prepared to face the difficulties of penetrating to the great ranges of the interior.

"The Charles Louis Mountains in Central Dutch New Guinea are an immense snow-capped range forming part of the great central system that stretches east and west across the island. The highest peaks are believed to attain an altitude of from 16,500 to 17,500 feet, and are thus the loftiest mountains in the whole Archipelago, and in the whole area between the Himalayas and the Andes. They probably exceed the Owen Stanley Mountains in British New Guinea by about 5000 feet. Until quite recently the hostility of the natives has frustrated all attempts to enter this part of New Guinea, but the time has now come when it is possible for a properly equipped expedition to explore the range, the Dutch having arrived at an amicable understanding with the inhabitants.

"During the last few years Mr. Walter Goodfellow, the

well-known traveller, has made several expeditions to New Guinea, and as the result of careful enquiries he has satisfied himself that the projected undertaking would in all probability prove successful.

“It is proposed that an Expedition should leave England about June, 1909, under the leadership of Mr. Goodfellow, who has been able to make specially favourable arrangements for obtaining porters and transport.

“The services of two other well-known naturalists with previous experience in New Guinea have also been secured, and to these it is hoped to add two more specially selected men, should the funds prove sufficient, so that all branches of Zoology and Botany may be investigated.

“As a large sum of money has already been promised, the working expenses of the Expedition are assured, but my great desire is to associate this undertaking with the Union, so that it may be known as the ‘B. O. U. Jubilee Exploration of the Charles Louis Mountains.’

“Should the scheme meet with your approval I shall be glad to receive subscriptions from any Member of the B.O.U. of sums from half a guinea upwards. These may be sent direct to Mr. C. E. Fagan, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London, S.W., who has kindly consented to act as Treasurer.

“The greater the resources the longer the Expedition can remain in the field. Any available funds after the termination of the Expedition might be devoted to the publication of a special volume of the ‘Ibis,’ containing the ornithological results of the Expedition.

“It is intended that such portions of the collections as may be required for the British Museum shall be offered to that Institution, as a present from the Subscribers.”